

Used Art

Student sculptures
made from recycled
materials on display
at the Art Complex
Museum

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DUXBURY —A giant mushroom alone in the grass, a diamond in the rough, a barbed wire swing, a Diet Coke can trash can, are just a few of the many Student Outdoor Sculptures inspiring young artists to think green, and think big. This year's creative participants hailed from Norwell High School, Sacred Heart High School, Silver Lake Regional High School and the South Shore Charter School in Norwell.

It was not the intention of the various art instructors, or Art Complex Museum Education Coordinator Sally Dean-Mello, for the students to create projects about the environment, political issues or social issues, however when given the concept of using recycled material it just seemed natural that they would tap into the raw materials that affect their world.

This annual exhibit is historically a show encouraging the students, to not go out and buy materials, but instead to utilize recycled items, Silver Lake Regional High School Art Instructor Jane Napolitano said. Dean-Mello speaks to each class, showing the students former projects, and getting them thinking about their own project, with the concept in mind of using recycled materials.

In Napolitano's art class the project is part of her junior and senior students fourth quarter grade. The project teaches the students to brainstorm an idea, develop the concept with a written pro-

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ART COMPLEX MUSEUM

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In "Our Brave New World," by South Shore Charter School student Shannon Leary, the unconquerable darkness overcomes the figure presented here.

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posal describing all materials they will use, plus a sketch of their project, as well as actually taking their concept to design and a finished project, and then presenting their idea to viewers. The projects gives the students a feel for what artists and sculptures do every time their work is placed on display to the public.

"The popular event, as it has the past several years, offers an excellent opportunity to display the work of talented students, which is often as varied as they are themselves," Laura Ricketson Doherty, Communications Coordinator at the Art Complex Museum stated in a press release about the exhibit. "By participating in the program, students learn how an artist and a museum work. They are responsible for developing and presenting their proposals, choosing a specific site and creating their own works of art."

Napolitano said that some students have a specific piece in mind from the beginning, and then must develop the concept around the project. Junior Mike Crawford knew the day Dean-Mello presented the project to the class that he wanted to make a giant mushroom, Napolitano said. Other students take time and brainstorm ideas, develop a concept first, and then work out how they will create the concept through a project.

"I am making a giant mushroom" Napolitano said Crawford told her that day. "He, right off the bat, had an idea and followed through with it. Others talked about in the classroom, did research on environmental artists, they thought about for quite a while before coming up with a project."

Crawford and Joe Davis created their giant mushroom, "La Reserva Natural," to represent the importance of preserving natural surroundings. The person-size mushroom depicts the need to preserve our natural surrounds, or else a normal size mushroom will be so out of place it will always seem life size.

The SOS began at the museum nine years ago in 1998 under the name Retro Formations. Five years ago Dean-Mello took over the project and changed the name to Student Outdoor Sculptures. The display is entirely up to the students, from concept, to design, to proposal, to creation Dean-Mello said. She said that often the proposals submitted to her prior to the display of the project don't quite convey what the students are trying to get across, but she is always pleasantly surprised to see the final outcome on the campus.

"I do like working with high school kids, they have a lot to say and this is a way to say it that is really different," Dean-Mello said. "The project has a lot of challenges with the outdoor concept, art can be made durable, and I am amazed with the concepts students create."

Deanne Noiseaux, art instructor at Norwell High School, also implements the project into the curriculum of her junior and senior students. Her students first research installation artists and

their work to understand and get a feel for what the art form represents. Installation art, is defined as art that is created for a specific site, often incorporating materials or physical features of the site, it uses sculptural materials and other media to modify the way to experience a particular space.

"That is what is so interesting about the project, it lends itself to ask questions, why does it look like that, and what it is it for? What is installation art? It is not so much about beauty, but about the concept," Noiseaux said about her student's projects. "Installation art is based on a concept important to you and everyone and placed outside, it is different than looking at a painting, the outdoor space is part of the sculptured pieces. I am impressed with what the students come up with, it is extremely different every year."

A simple swing hanging from a tree with barbed wire running through the middle, was Sacred Heart High School student Mary Donovan's way of expressing the innocence of childhood, represented by the swing, and the loss of the innocence, represented by the barbed wire. Norwell High School students Cynthia Horrigan, Paulina Dyko, Kristen Yen and Laura Powers show the importance of recycling through their sculpture with an IV tube to its center in their sculpture "It's a small world." Ryan Skerry and Ray Trotta magnificently depict society like an ant colony with their images of tiny people swarming and ant hill with the queen ant planted firmly at the top in their sculpture, "Society."

Although the meaning of some of the projects is crystal clear, other are left open for interpretation. Each student project reflects the concerns of our world today, the images present in the minds of young adults, and just what can be done with another man's garbage. From soda cans, to old shoes, umbrellas and antique mirrors, everything made yesterday is art tomorrow.

The Student Outdoor Sculpture exhibit will be on display on the grounds of the Duxbury Art Complex Museum until June 17. For information on the museum, and any of their exhibits visit www.artcomplex.org.

Staff Photos
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Silver Lake Regional High School students Joanna Gillis and Claire Steele's project "Consumerism" speaks for itself with a trash barrel made out of Diet Coke cans.



Above, "Precious Nature" by Sacred Heart High School student Lauren Joyal shows the beauty of nature represented by a giant diamond.